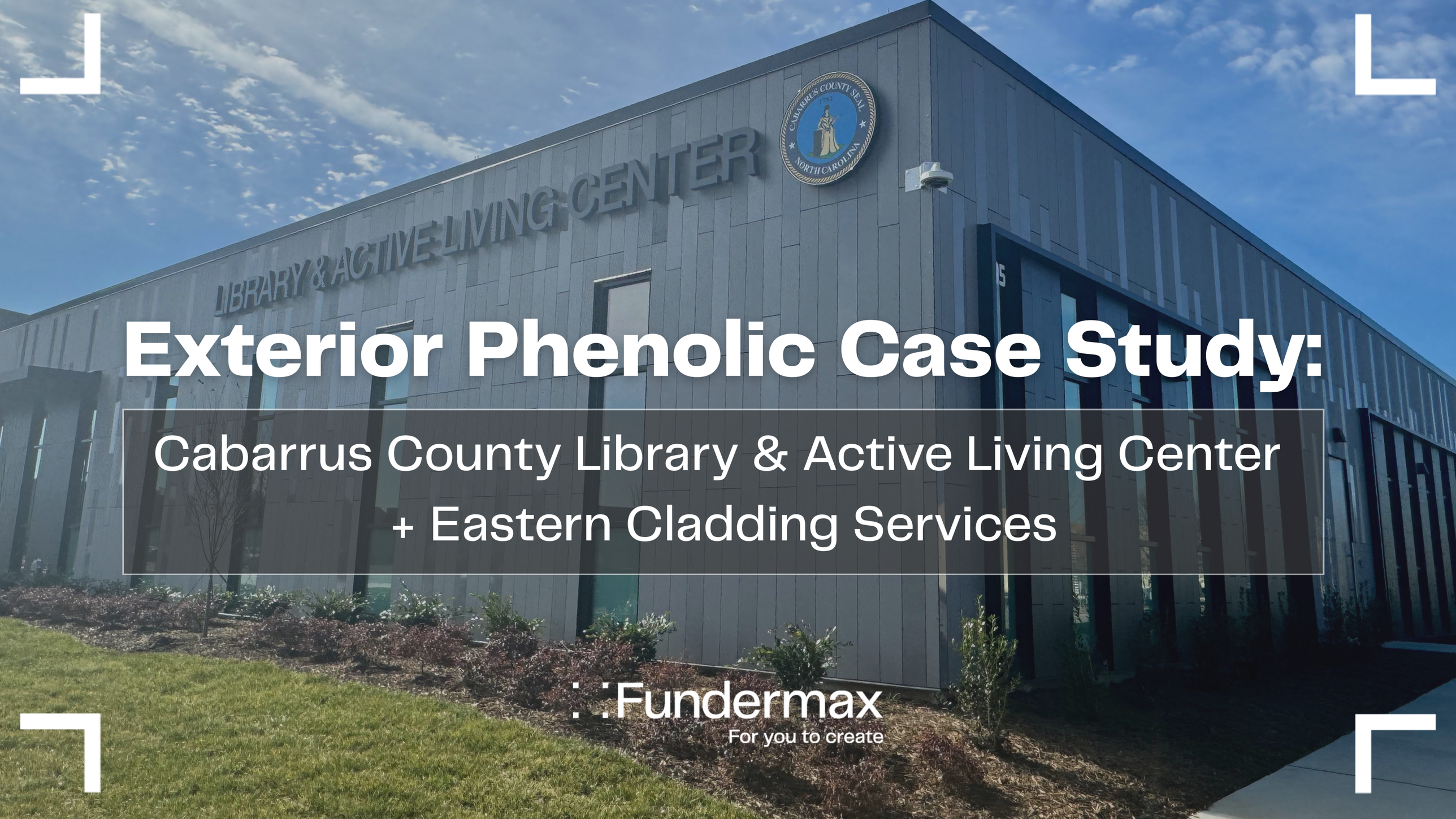

Exterior Phenolic Case Study:

Cabarrus County Library & Active Living Center + Eastern Cladding Services

Fundermax

For you to create

The Library and Active Living Center at Afton Ridge in Kannapolis, North Carolina, is a stunning example of Fundermax panels elevating a design with versatile accommodation.

Located in a rapidly growing part of Cabarrus County, the Library and Active Living Center at Afton Ridge broke ground in 2023 as the first county facility to be opened in the area.

The facility acts as a beacon of community at the intersection of activity, learning, and fun. Fundermax phenolic panels were utilized to vitalize the exterior with a dynamic design, embodying the facility's versatility.

The community-oriented space intertwines education and recreation, offering fitness classes, yoga, tai chi, and games, as well as a wide range of reading materials, study spaces, and more.

Situation

Located in a rapidly growing part of Cabarrus County, the Library and Active Living Center at Afton Ridge broke ground in 2023 as the first county facility to be opened in the area. The facility's exterior design, administered by Silling Architects and HBM Architects LLC and precisely executed by Eastern Cladding Services, fulfills a modern aesthetic embedded throughout the 40,000 sq. ft. space.

The cladding material needed to extend to the building's long, vertical window panes and by the posterior's outdoor activity space, which features bocce and shuffleboard courts. This brought forward the following key considerations:

DESIGN OPTIMIZATION

One of the architects' main considerations of the design vision was a material that was able to match the facility's slim, longward window mullions, which extend throughout the exterior. This called for a cladding product that could be installed in conjunction with vertical joint lines.

The install team had several conversations to ensure that everybody was aware of the major concern. If the joints did not align, the design vision would have been compromised, resulting in a longer process to complete the installation and project as a whole.

Situation

MATERIAL TECHNICALITIES

The ECS team had little experience working with phenolic panels prior to installation. Questions arose, specifically regarding the concealed weight-bearing clips, a key component of Modulo, Fundermax's concealed, closed-joint plank fastening system. While ease of installation is a noted benefit of the system, proper installation would be crucial in ensuring the design came to fruition as planned.

The team had worked with other cladding materials, such as ACM and fiber cement, but Rick Brown, Senior Estimator at ECS, noted that working with Fundermax panels brought questions regarding product handling and application.

INTRICATE DESIGN

The architects envisioned a contrasting aesthetic presenting different textures of the same decor, with a third, darker tone surrounding the window elements.

To fulfill this vision, the material of choice would not only require high design decor offerings, but it also needed the capability for a concealed installation with no open joints in a vertical plank formation.

Further, the cladding had to seamlessly fill in the windows that surround the exterior, including portions encompassed by large glass panes.

“There were not many [installations with phenolic panels] that we had under our belt at the time,” says Brown. “This was one of the very early-on projects that we had to kind of cut our teeth on when it came to [phenolic panels].”

– Rick Brown, Senior Estimator, Eastern Cladding Services



Photo Credit: Silling Architects



Photo Credit: Silling Architects



Photo Credit: Silling Architects

Solution

Fundermax proved to be the right choice for a few key reasons:

DESIGN VERSATILITY

The Modulo plank system was utilized, providing the facility with a durable, modern fastening solution. The system made it possible to apply pre-fabricated planks without open joints vertically, preserving install time and allowing the design vision to be fulfilled more easily.

“It was a very good install,” says Jason Rice, General Manager of ECS. “The team that installed the product experienced a very smooth transition.”

Fundermax’s factory cut-to-size option and our fully engineered package program fit the project’s needs and made the cladding process, as a whole, more smooth.





Solution

AESTHETIC OPTIONS

While Fundermax provides a wide range of decor options, the potential for design freedom is deepened further by a variety of panel finishes. To fulfill the desired contrasting aesthetic, our NP “Paragon” surface, which presents a matte, anti-fingerprint effect, and NG “Gloss” surface, with a mirrored, shiny finish, were combined. By using Dark Grey (#0075) with each finish, the design vision was fulfilled.

Blackjack (#0799), a dark, textured decor, was applied around the window areas in a third finish, NT “Standard”, adding contemporary accents to the exterior.

“The three finishes turned out looking really good,” says Rice. “I was curious about how the design intent would come together at first, but it ended up looking great, and the three different finishes contrasted really nicely.”



Solution

PRODUCT SUPPORT

To assist with any pre-installation concerns, Fundermax provided the team with information on product and system components, as well as installation guidelines.

Project Manager Brandon Fullerton noted, “It ended up not being an issue... Before we even started the installation, we had sorted that all out with [Fundermax], so that made us feel comfortable, which was good.”

By ensuring the provision of adequate instruction, Max Compact Exterior phenolic panels were an optimal solution, providing an ideal blend of ease of installation and capability to meet design needs.



“We enjoyed working with the product, and we’re hoping to have it on more projects soon.”

– Jason Rice, General Manager, Eastern Cladding Services


FDC






Photo Credit: Silling Architects



Photo Credit: Silling Architects




LIBRARY & ACTIVE LIVING CENTER
RESERVED PARKING
MAXIMUM PENALTY $250



Photo Credit: Silling Architects








LIBRARY &












LIBRARY & ACTIVE LIVING CENTER
CABARRUS COUNTY SEAL
1792
NORTH CAROLINA

The Fundermax Difference

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Rice noted that, despite initial unfamiliarity with Fundermax panels, through a combination of straightforward application and adequate support, the installation was carried through without issue.

Fundermax and the sales rep provided technical guides and assembly documentation to ensure that the architects' vision came together seamlessly. "I never had a problem getting material quotes or getting answers to technical questions, and the service is outstanding," says Rice.

On the prospect of working with Fundermax again in the future, Rice said, "Absolutely... Back then it was a mysterious product that we weren't too familiar with, but I really do like the material."

Rice also noted the benefits of the panels' durability and cleanability, recalling a fiber cement installation that was tagged with graffiti and had to be completely replaced. "[Fundermax panels] are easier to work with, for sure," says Rice. "The product is a lot easier to clean."

Fundermax exterior phenolic wall panels made it possible for a sleek, modern facade design to come to fruition without roadblocks and fulfilling the initial design vision. The end result is a prime example of how the Modulo plank system provides endless opportunities for high design while maintaining the longevity, durability, code compliance, and sustainability of Fundermax phenolic panels.

This project stands as a testament to how phenolic panels can benefit all phases of exterior design, from the architects' original vision, the installer's ease of application, and now, the enjoyment of the region's community.



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